

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

2101 CONSTITUTION AVENUE, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20418

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

19 July 1968

Professor Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
Stanford University School of Medicine
Stanford Medical Center
Palo Alto, California 94304

Dear Professor Lederberg:

I now feel somewhat closer to the subject matter of the project for the Washington Post and hope that this letter will enable you to fit the pieces into place.

As I wrote before, we intend that you write the keystone piece of the section, dealing entirely with the sweep of present and anticipated developments in human genetics as they may affect present and future societies. We shall call upon others to anticipate the nature of the probable effects, their observations to be based on your completed article.

The developments that we would like you to deal with can be divided into two sections: those that could now serve as the basis for individual or social action and those that have a reasonable degree of probability in the next few decades.

Both lists are based on discussions that have been held by a number of human geneticists, and in which you may well have participated. I claim no credit for the list. It was cribbed in its entirety from a longer list supplied by Arno Motulsky.

PRESENT POSSIBILITIES

1. Screening for genetic defects
2. Genetic counseling
3. Genetic probabilities of adoptive children
4. Genetic investigation of semen donors

5. Use of vital statistics to make demographic studies of genetic effects on fertility and mortality
6. Genetic effects of family planning
7. Effects of environmental mutagens
8. Dysgenic effects of medical practices
9. Use of large-scale data banks on genetic malformations
10. Genetic indicators for abortions
11. Fetal diagnosis
12. Relationship between chromosomal abnormalities and criminal tendencies
13. Genetic differentiation among races
14. Delayed somatic effects of viral inoculations

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

1. Germinal choice
2. Gametic selection
3. In vitro fertilization
4. Cloning
5. Parthenogenesis
6. Fertilized egg fusion
7. Interspecific hybridization
8. Genetic surgery

It is quite apparent that there is more than enough subject matter for an article of the length the Post can use. I am ready to leave to you the authority to choose from among this lot those developments which you think have greatest significance, now or in the immediate future, for the individual and society. If you can add a rough timetable, so much the better.

Does this provide you with what you need? Don't hesitate to call me here at 202-961-1518. I shall be going on vacation 27 July, but will be reachable even then through my office.

Very sincerely,

Howard J. Lewis
Director
Office of Information

HJL:ca
cc: Howard Simons
J.V. Reistrup